



## THE PERSISTENT TERROR THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES

*In the past 12 months...*

**39 HOMEGROWN JIHADIST  
CASES in 20 STATES for...**

Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin

- ✓ PLOTS TO ATTACK
- ✓ OVERSEAS TRAVEL
- ✓ FINANCIAL SUPPORT
- ✓ LYING TO AUTHORITIES
- ✓ WEAPONS CHARGES



### ISIS-LINKED PLOTS AGAINST THE WEST SINCE 2013

**199**

TOTAL ISIS-LINKED  
PLOTS TO ATTACK THE  
WEST OR WESTERN  
TARGETS



**21**

OF THESE IN THE  
FIRST FOUR MONTHS  
OF 2017 ALONE



**63 CASES**

ISIS USED OR  
ATTEMPTED TO BUILD  
OR USE EXPLOSIVES



**14 TIMES**

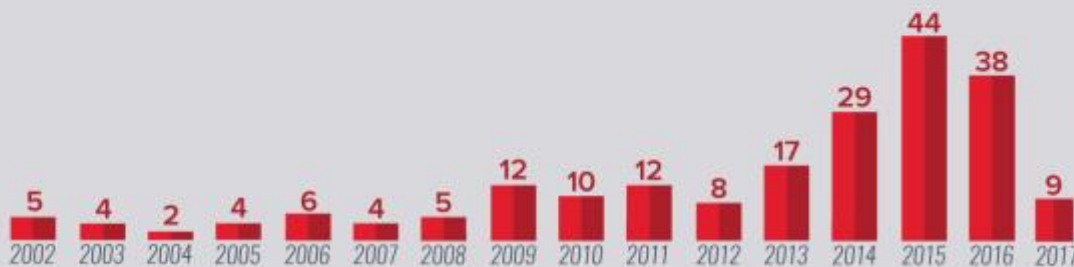
A VEHICLE  
WAS USED AS  
A WEAPON



**44 TIMES**

AN EDGED  
WEAPON WAS  
USED

## HOMEGROWN JIHADIST CASES IN AMERICA SINCE 9/11



**= 209 TOTAL**

**HOMELAND.HOUSE.GOV**

*This document is produced by the Majority Staff of the House Homeland Security Committee. It is based on information culled from open source materials, including media reports, publicly available government statements, and nongovernmental assessments.*



## KEY POINTS

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- ◆ The Trump administration authorized an operation against a Syrian military airfield this month, marking the United States' first military action against Bashar al Assad and his troops since the beginning of the Syrian civil war. The operation was in response to an earlier chemical weapon attack by the Syrian government in northwestern Syria that killed more than 80 people.
- ◆ The U.S. continues its diligent fight against ISIS' branch in Afghanistan, as it dropped its most powerful non-nuclear bomb on a network of underground tunnels used by ISIS Khorasan this month, killing 36 fighters in the bomb's first ever combat use.
- ◆ The days before crucial national elections in France were marked by an ISIS-claimed attack and foiled ISIS terror plot. ISIS-took credit for an attack that left a police officer dead in the middle of one of Paris' most popular tourist attractions, the famous Avenue de Champs Elysees, while a separate terrorist attack was foiled in Marseille.
- ◆ Two deadly Palm Sunday attacks against Coptic Christians by ISIS' Sinai branch marked ["the single deadliest day of violence directed against the Middle East's largest Christian community in decades."](#) Egypt is no stranger to ISIS and its precursor group, Ansar Bayt al Maqdis, but it seems ISIS has turned a strong focus toward the country, investing more time, resources and energy into its fight.

## HOMEOWN ISLAMIST EXTREMISM

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- ◆ Cases of homegrown Islamist extremism in the United States continue to increase as U.S. Persons radicalize. Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, there have been 209 homegrown jihadist cases in the United States, of which 132 of involved ISIS-related arrests.<sup>1</sup>

## Recent Developments

- ◆ [April 26, 2017](#): Laith Waleed Alebbini, 26, was arrested after he obtained his boarding pass for a flight to Chicago as he attempted to travel to Turkey to [join ISIS](#). He had previously been arrested in January for [entering](#) the Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C., where he said in an interview, "If I had a bomb on me, I swear to God, three embassies would have gone down."
- ◆ [April 12, 2017](#): Joseph D. Jones, aka "Yusuf Abdulhaqq," 35, and Edward Schimenti, aka "Abdul Wali," 35, both of Zion, Illinois [pledged allegiance](#) to ISIS and advocated for violent extremism in support of ISIS on social media. They befriended individuals whom they believed were three [ISIS supporters](#), two of whom were undercover FBI employees and one was

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<sup>1</sup> These figures are based on open-source data compiled and analyzed by the Majority Staff of the Homeland Security Committee.



working in cooperation with law enforcement. Jones and Schimenti reportedly gave several cell phones to the cooperating source with the understanding that the source would use the phones to [detonate explosives](#) in an overseas ISIS attack. Additionally, the pair [drove](#) the source to Chicago's O'Hare international Airport believing that person was leaving to join ISIS. The two were arrested on a federal complaint which charged them with conspiring and attempting to [provide material support](#) and resources to ISIS.

## **ISIS TERROR PLOTS AGAINST THE WEST**

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- ◆ Since the group's inception in 2013, there have been at least 199 ISIS-linked plots or attacks against the West or western targets, 21 in the first four months of 2017 alone.<sup>2</sup> Nearing the 200-mark, ISIS continues to use everyday items to carry out heinous attacks. Since 2013, there have been 44 recorded instances of ISIS-linked plots or attacks where an edged weapon was used, and 14 recorded instances where a vehicle was used as a weapon. Additionally, building homemade explosives continues to be of interest to the group, with 63 cases recorded by the Committee where ISIS used or attempted to build or use explosives to carry out an attack in the West or against western targets. Five of these cases have occurred just this year.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ European intelligence and law enforcement continue their push to ward off extremist violence, yet the ISIS-inspired attack in [Stockholm](#) marked Europe's fourth attack in which the group used a vehicle as a weapon against a crowd in the last 12 months. An ISIS attack on the police in the middle of a Parisian tourist attraction came at a particularly sensitive time for the country, just days before voters went to the polls in the first round of the French presidential election.

## **Recent Developments**

- ◆ [April 24, 2017](#): Mouner el Aoual, a 29-year-old Moroccan planned an attack in Italy, where he had been living for [nine years](#) with an Italian family. El Aoual was an illegal immigrant who arrived in Italy in 2008. He was an [administrator](#) of an ISIS social media channel, using various names to post online, demonstrating the will to [plan a terrorist attack](#) in Italy while searching for others to help him. He had [sworn allegiance](#) to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.
- ◆ [April 20, 2017](#): ISIS claimed an attack on French policemen in [Paris, which left one officer dead](#) and two others wounded. The attack occurred on the popular Champs Elysees boulevard, which was crowded with people. The assailant, named as Karim Cheurfi, a 39-year-old French national, fired an automatic weapon at a police van, killing one officer inside. He then shot at police standing nearby, injuring two. The assailant, who was reportedly [known](#) to French authorities, was shot dead at the scene. The [shootings](#) occurred at a particularly tense period in France, which has been in a state of emergency since the 2015 Paris attack, coming three days before the start of the French presidential election.

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<sup>2</sup> Data recently collected by the Committee on previous ISIS terror claims has increased the total number to 199, despite there only being four ISIS-linked plots/attacks on the West in April.

<sup>3</sup> These figures are based on open-source data compiled and analyzed by the Majority Staff of the Homeland Security Committee.



- ◆ [April 18, 2017](#): Two French nationals were arrested for [planning](#) an attack in France, [reportedly](#) within days of the first round of the French presidential elections. The suspects shared a cell in prison, and were both [known to intelligence](#) services as radicalized. The men were arrested at different addresses. A [raid](#) on a Marseille apartment turned up an ISIS flag, guns, 3kg of explosives, a map of the city and other objects that could be used in an attack. Additionally, one of the men claimed [allegiance](#) to ISIS in a video.
- ◆ [April 7, 2017](#): Rahkmat Akilov hijacked a beer truck and drove it into a crowd of people then crashed it into a popular department store in Stockholm, Sweden. [Five people died](#) as a result of the attack and [15 others were injured](#). The assailant [escaped](#) the scene, but was detained in a northern suburb of Stockholm after a nationwide manhunt ensued. While ISIS has yet to claim responsibility for the incident, reports suggest Akilov had [ISIS sympathies](#) and he was [recruited](#) by ISIS when he spent time abroad. He also reportedly [encouraged](#) other Uzbeks to travel to Syria and fight with ISIS. His lawyer said he will [plead guilty](#), and has admitted to the attack. Akilov applied for residency in 2014, but, in December 2016, his residency was [denied](#), and he was told to exit the country in four weeks. He failed to leave, thus was put on a wanted list but was considered only a [“marginal character”](#) by Swedish security services.

## THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISLAMIST TERROR

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### *ISIS*

#### **Operations Against ISIS Territory**

- ◆ [April 29, 2017](#): Weston C. Lee, a 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant with the 82nd Airborne Division, was killed near Mosul, Iraq by an explosive device that detonated during a [patrol](#), while he was providing security as part of U.S. advise-and-assist efforts in Iraq.
- ◆ [April 27, 2017](#): In a joint US-Afghan raid targeting [ISIS Khorasan](#) Group in Nangarhar Province, Sgt. Joshua P. Rodgers of Illinois and Sgt. Cameron H. Thomas of Ohio were killed and another service member was wounded. Gen. John W. Nicholson, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan expressed remorse for the loss, [saying](#), “The fight against ISIS-K is important for the world, but sadly, it is not without sacrifice.” The operation was carried out in the [Achin District](#) of the province, which serves as ISIS’ primary base in Afghanistan. It is the same district where the U.S. dropped the GBU 43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast earlier this month in a separate attack targeting ISIS Khorasan.
- ◆ [April 22, 2017](#): A raid by the Lebanese army killed a [local ISIS leader](#) and led to the arrest of suspected ISIS militants who previously had entered Aarsal, a town in northeast Lebanon that borders Syria. Militants briefly controlled [Aarsal](#) in 2014, and the ISIS leader killed was involved in kidnapping soldiers along with attacking military positions amidst the 2014 fighting.



- ◆ [April 13, 2017](#): The first combat use of the [GBU 43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb](#) (commonly known as the “mother of all bombs”) came in a strike on ISIS Khorasan in Nangarhar Province as part of an ongoing air campaign against the group’s branch in Afghanistan. The strike killed 36 fighters, according to Afghan officials, as the U.S. dropped its most [powerful](#) non-nuclear bomb on a network of underground tunnels used by ISIS-K.
- ◆ [April 8, 2017](#): Mark R. de Alencar, an Army Special Forces soldier Staff Sgt. from Maryland, died from injuries sustained in an operation [helping](#) Afghan forces fight against ISIS Khorasan in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan.

### **Notable ISIS Members Targeted**

- ◆ [April 5, 2017](#): Abdurakhmon Uzbeki, who is reportedly linked to the New Year’s Eve attack on the Reina nightclub in Istanbul and is thought to be a [close associate](#) of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was killed in a U.S. ground operation in Mayadin, Syria.
- ◆ [April 11, 2017](#): Moammar Askali, an Abu Sayyaf commander involved in the [beheadings](#) of a German and two Canadian hostages, was killed in a battle with Philippine troops on the country’s Bohol Island.

### **Recent Non-Western ISIS Plots/Attacks**

- ◆ [April 24, 2017](#): Abu Sayyaf beheaded a [Filipino](#) soldier who was kidnapped by the group the week before. Sergeant Anni Siraji’s head was found 50 meters away from his body in Patikul town in Sulu, Philippines, [according](#) to the commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu.
- ◆ [April 21, 2017](#): In Russia, a gunman [attacked](#) a Federal Security Service (FSB) regional office, an assault claimed by ISIS through its Amaq news agency. The ISIS claim contradicted the FSB’s earlier report that the gunman was a [nationalist](#). One FSB employee was [killed](#) in the attack, along with an individual who was visiting the office.
- ◆ [April 18, 2017](#): ISIS attacked an Egyptian [police checkpoint](#) in the Sinai, killing one policeman and injuring four. The attack was carried out near the renowned [St. Catherine’s Monastery](#), which is popular among tourists visiting the Red Sea.
- ◆ [April 16, 2017](#): ISIS hit an Iraqi unit that contained both U.S. and Australian advisers with chemical weapons near Mosul, according to Maj. Gen. Joseph Martin, who is leading land forces in Iraq under Operation Inherent Resolve. A [mustard agent](#) that was fired from an ISIS rocket left 25 Iraqi soldiers in need of medical treatment. No [American or Australian](#) advisers were injured.





- ◆ [April 12, 2017](#): A suicide bomber in Kabul [killed](#) at least five and wounded 10 others in an attack claimed by ISIS near the Administrative Office of the President and the Ministries of Defense and Finance.
- ◆ [April 9, 2017](#): ISIS claimed responsibility for two [attacks](#) on Coptic Christian churches on Palm Sunday, a day revered on the Christian calendar as the start of Holy Week. At least [27 were killed](#) and [78 injured](#) when a bomb exploded during a church service at St. George's Church in Tanta in the Nile Delta, about 60 miles north of Cairo. That attack was followed by a separate suicide bombing outside St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Alexandria, where [18 civilians and four police officers](#) were reported killed and at least [125 injured](#). Mahmoud Hassan Mubarak Abdullah was [named](#) as the Alexandria attacker. Following the bombings, a [three-month state of emergency](#) was imposed by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.
- ◆ [April 8, 2017](#): ISIS [attacked](#) US-led coalition troops and allied Syrian opposition forces on the Syrian-Jordanian border. The group attacked the [At Tanf Garrison](#) first with a vehicle-borne IED, followed by a ground assault which included fighters wearing suicide vests. A battle ensued as coalition and allied forces [repelled](#) the attack, then destroyed ISIS vehicles and fighters with airstrikes. While U.S. Special Forces aided in the fight, there were [no American casualties](#).

## ***AL QAEDA***

- ◆ In a rare occurrence, Al Qaeda released an audio message from its leader Ayman al Zawahiri [this month](#). The recording was released via social media by the group's propaganda arm, As Sahab. In his comments, Zawahiri [urges](#) that the conflict in Syria be seen as the "cause of the entire Ummah." He endorses the insurgency in Syria and [encourages](#) fighters to weaken their enemies rather than focusing on holding territory at this point in the conflict. The United States and the West at large are touted by Zawahiri as being in league with both [Iran and Bashar al Assad](#), and [he tells](#) Syrians to ready themselves "for a protracted war against the Crusaders" along with Iran and the Assad regime. "Know no wavering or compromise," [he says](#). "Die honorably, but never accept a life of humiliation."

## **Notable Al Qaeda Members Targeted**

- ◆ [April 8, 2017](#): Bashe Nure Hassan, a key [commander](#) of Al Shabaab, was killed during an attack in Jubaland, Somalia. Responding to an [assault](#) on a Somali base, the Somali National Army and Kenyan Defense Force (KDF) killed Hassan and two other Al Shabaab militants.
- ◆ The U.S. is [helping](#) Somalia step up its fight against Al Qaeda's Al Shabaab in response to recent hard-hitting attacks by the group throughout the past few months. On April 2, 2017 the U.S. sent the first deployment of [ground troops](#) (not including small advisory units that have previously deployed) to the country since 1994. An April 6, 2017 [declaration of war](#) on Al Shabaab by Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo led him to rearrange his top



security staff and replace the mayor of Mogadishu. Al Shabaab militants were given [60 days](#) to surrender in exchange for amnesty.

## **Recent Al Qaeda Plots/Attacks**

### **AQ Central Command**

- ◆ [April 3, 2017](#): The [Imam Shamil Battalion](#) claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on the metro in St. Petersburg, Russia that [killed](#) 15 people and [wounded](#) at least 60. [Akbarzhon Jalilov](#), a Russian citizen born in Kyrgyzstan, detonated his bomb between two stations on the city's metro. In a statement released by the group, it [claimed](#) that Jalilov carried out the attack on orders from Al Qaeda's leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, and warned against additional attacks.

### **Al Shabaab**

- ◆ [April 27, 2017](#): In Mogadishu, Al Shabaab claimed the [killing](#) of senior national intelligence officer Mohamud Haji Ali. The intelligence officer was [involved](#) in security operations against the group and was killed by gunmen while sitting outside of his home.

### **Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin**

- ◆ [April 7, 2017](#): The Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb associate killed a French soldier and wounded two others in the group's first attack against a [western target](#). A military vehicle came under attack by an improvised explosive device (IED) and direct fire on the Malian-Burkinabe border where [French military](#) work to support counterterrorism operations.

### ***SELECT ATTACKS, OTHER ISLAMIST TERROR GROUPS***

- ◆ [April 21, 2017](#): [Taliban](#) fighters dressed in military uniforms attacked the military headquarters of Afghanistan's 209<sup>th</sup> Shaheen Corps near Mazar-e-Sharif in the Balkh Province, killing as many as 140 people. More than 100 of those killed or wounded in the attack, which happened as many were observing Friday prayers, were soldiers.